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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON

**OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASS'N
and WESTERN WATERSHEDS PROJECT,**

Plaintiffs,

v.

**CAROLYN FREEBORN, Field Manager, Jordan
Resource Area, BLM; DAVE HENDERSON,
Vale District Manager, BLM; BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT; and UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,**

Defendants.

Civil No. 06-1311-MO

**DEFENDANTS'
STATUS REPORT**

Pursuant to the order of the Court directing Defendants to file a status report by this date (Dkt. #38), Defendants hereby respectfully submit this report to apprise the Court and parties of the work they have performed since the Court granted their motion for a stay and to provide an estimated schedule for the completion of their next steps in work they have yet to undertake.

More specifically, the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"), operating through its Jordan Resource Area on the Vale District in southeastern Oregon, has been updating and

maintaining its inventory on wilderness characteristics within the project area for the Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area (“LCGMA”) since January 2007. During this time, BLM, through the use of an Interdisciplinary Team (“ID Team”), has been engaged in a process by which it is reasonably seeking to ensure that it has accurate and current information regarding the presence of any wilderness characteristics outside of existing Wilderness Study Areas (“WSAs”) within the LCGMA project area. This process in which BLM has been engaged to maintain and update its inventory of wilderness characteristics has included multiple field checks by BLM staff (including the taking of photographs) and meetings of the ID Team. BLM has also analyzed the information provided by Plaintiff Oregon Natural Desert Association in its February 6, 2004, wilderness report, existing information contained in BLM files from the agency’s original inventory effort, and any other new relevant and reliable information available to BLM.

BLM had hoped to have its wilderness characteristics evaluations and inventory update completed earlier, but the employee time that has turned out to be necessary to carry out a reasonably thorough and complete update was more than it originally anticipated. Additionally, the need for the agency to respond to fires that broke out on BLM lands in the Vale District in the summer of 2007 resulted in the loss of available employees to work on maintaining and updating the inventory. Nevertheless, BLM has substantially completed its work to maintain and update the inventory – as evidenced in 17 wilderness evaluation forms it has preliminarily completed that examine roughly 320,000 acres in the Jordan Resource Area – but these forms are still in the process of final proof-reading and review. BLM expects to have its wilderness characteristics evaluations in this regard finalized within a week, by October 26, 2007.

Based on the findings it makes upon finalization of the wilderness evaluation forms,

BLM will supplement its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to whatever extent may be appropriate. As is its customary practice, BLM will provide for public comment on any supplemental NEPA analysis that it prepares. It is BLM's current goal to have the supplemental NEPA analysis out for public comment and review by February 2008. BLM will advise the Court when it makes available any supplemental NEPA analysis it prepares for public comment.

DATED this 19th day of October 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

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/s/ Stephen J. Odell
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